



大马残障自立协会

MALAYSIA INDEPENDENT LIVING ASSOCIATION FOR DISABLED



NEWSLETTER

April - June 2025

A Season of Impact and Remembrance

Dear friends and supporters,

As we cross the mid-year mark, we at the Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (MILAD) are reminded of the people and moments that continue to shape our journey toward a more inclusive society

This issue begins with a tribute to Shoji Nakanishi, a pioneer of the independent living movement in the Asia Pacific. His passing in March left a profound impact on our community. Yet, through the voices of those he mentored and inspired, we are reminded that his legacy lives on – in every centre, in every act of resistance, and in every person who dares to believe in dignity and self-determination..

In the spirit of that legacy, we share stories of hope and action – the launch of Malaysia's first Disability Inclusion Leadership Training (DILT) programme for young persons with disabilities, heartfelt donations that provided groceries and wheelchairs to those in need, and a traditional healing initiative that bridged cultures and languages with compassion.

Each moment reminds us that inclusion is not an idea, but a lifestyle—genuinely practised by people who care enough to act appropriately.

Thank you for standing with us in oneness of heart.

In solidarity,
The MILAD Team



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HONOURING SHOJI NAKANISHI

A Legacy That Lives On

Independent living is not a privilege for the few. It is a right for all.

On March 26, 2025, we received the heartbreaking news that Shoji Nakanishi, former Regional Chairperson of DPI Asia Pacific and a towering figure in the global disability rights movement, had passed away peacefully.

To many of us in the Asia Pacific region, Shoji-san was more than a leader. He was a friend, a mentor, and a movement builder. He reminded us that real change does not begin in policies. It begins with people daring to believe in their worth.

Long before the idea of “independent living” took root in our region, Shoji envisioned a future where disabled people, even in the most marginalised communities, could live in their own homes, make their own choices, and receive the support they need without being confined to institutions. Through his unwavering commitment, he helped turn that vision into reality.



Scan the QR code to access the memorial video created in honour of Shoji Nakanishi.

At MILAD, we felt moved to honour Shoji-san's memory in the way he would have valued most — by bringing people together. We invited disability leaders from across Asia to send video tributes, sharing how Shoji shaped their lives and local movements.

Their words echoed with quiet strength. They spoke of how Shoji inspired them, believed in them, and helped plant the first seeds of Independent Living in their countries. These were not just memories, but living proof of his impact.

We are deeply grateful to have received heartfelt messages from:

- Abner Manlapaz, Life Haven CIL (Philippines)
- Muhammad Shafiq Ur Rehman, Milestone (Society for the Special Persons) (Pakistan)
- Sia Siew Chin, Malaysia Independent Living Association For Disabled (MILAD)
- Udomchok Churut, Thailand Council for Independent Living (Thailand)
- Chea Bopha, PPcil (Cambodia)
- Dr. Jun Bernardino, Life Haven Center for Independent Living (Philippines)
- Samith Mey, PPcil (Cambodia)
- Ghulam Nabi Nizamani, All Sanghar Handicaps' Association (Pakistan)
- Chun Chien Lin, New Vitality Independent Living Center (Taiwan)
- Teresa Chua, Cebu Council on Independent Living (Philippines)

Together, their voices carried one clear message: Shoji believed in us, so we believed in ourselves. Though Shoji-san has left this world, his legacy lives on — in every Independent Living centre, in every policy breakthrough, and in every person who continues to fight for freedom, dignity, and inclusion.

Rest in power, Shoji.

We will carry your vision forward.

You will always be with us.



UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS FROM MILAD'S AIDILFITRI CELEBRATION

Last April, the atmosphere at MILAD's 2025 Hari Raya celebration was filled with warmth, laughter, and a strong sense of community. The gathering brought together people from all walks of life, including members of the disability community, volunteers, partners, and families, to celebrate Syawal in an inclusive and heartfelt way.

Every smile captured that day holds a story. Behind each photo is a journey, a struggle, a bond of support, and a shared hope for a more inclusive Malaysia.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined us, whether you posed for a photo, had a conversation, lent a hand, or simply showed up as your authentic self. Your presence made the day more meaningful than we ever imagined.

This celebration a



This celebration also reminds us of the importance of continuing conversations about rights, access, and fair opportunities for all. Hari Raya is more than just a festivity, it is a symbol of unity, empathy, and appreciation of our diversity.

We have included some snapshots from that special day, offering a glimpse into the joy and connection shared by our community. One photo may not change the world, but it can move hearts and spark reflection.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Let us continue walking together toward a society that is inclusive, hopeful, and supportive for all.



BRINGING HEALING CLOSER TO THE COMMUNITY



We were grateful to collaborate with the Lions Club Selangor TCM, who generously organised free Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) clinics at MILAD's centre in Petaling Jaya.

These sessions brought much-needed care and comfort to our community. The dedicated team provided acupuncture, tuina therapy, and herbal consultations, and even prepared lunch for persons with disabilities and volunteers. Their thoughtful gestures reminded us that true support goes beyond words, and is expressed through sincere, consistent action.



This monthly initiative has been especially meaningful for individuals with mobility challenges or chronic conditions. Having access to treatment in a familiar, safe, and accessible environment makes a real difference in their quality of life and emotional well-being.

We deeply appreciate this ongoing partnership and look forward to continuing this collaboration. We also welcome other kind-hearted organisations to join us in building a more inclusive and caring society.



We at the Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (MILAD) would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Kong for his generous donation of RM14,000 towards the purchase of wheelchairs.

Your contribution has made a tangible difference in the lives of our community members. By supporting access to essential mobility equipment, you have helped bring greater independence, dignity, and comfort to persons with disabilities in their daily lives.

Your generosity does more than provide resources — it uplifts our spirits and strengthens our collective commitment to building a more inclusive and supportive society.

On behalf of everyone at MILAD, thank you for believing in our mission and for standing in solidarity with our community.

A GIFT OF MOBILITY, A MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY





WHEN COMPASSION SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS



In May, we witnessed a beautiful act of kindness that reminded us how compassion can overcome even the most fundamental barriers — including language.

For several weeks, the volunteer group Từ Tâm had been coordinating with us, determined to deliver a meaningful contribution to our OKU (Persons with Disabilities) community. There were moments when we didn't fully understand each other's words. Still, the message in their actions was unmistakable — they cared deeply.

Their name, Từ Tâm, meaning “everything comes from the heart,” reflected not just their intention, but their way of working. Despite the language gap, they followed through with patience and clarity of purpose, ensuring that every item prepared would reach those who needed it most.

When the groceries arrived, they brought more than nourishment. They brought warmth, respect, and a powerful sense of solidarity. Their effort reminded us that empathy doesn't always need translation. It only needs sincerity.

From all of us at MILAD, thank you, Từ Tâm, for walking the extra mile with us. You reminded us that even without perfect words, it is possible to understand each other — and to build something truly meaningful, together.



BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF DISABILITY INCLUSION TRAINERS

We are proud to share that Malaysia's first certified training programme for young persons with disabilities, the Disability Inclusion Leadership Training (DILT), has officially launched.

Applications for this inaugural cohort recently closed on 30 June 2025. Over the next 18 months, selected participants will embark on a transformative journey to become professional disability inclusion trainers. The programme equips them to:

- Advise organisations on OKU (Persons with Disabilities) inclusion
- Facilitate Disability Equality Training (DET) workshops
- Work towards HRD Corp certification
- Champion the rights and voices of the OKU community

The DILT programme is designed for youth with disabilities aged 18 to 30, with a focus on meaningful leadership, professional development, and social change.

This milestone is made possible with the support of UNICEF Malaysia, DET Forum, the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability, and JICA. We also express our sincere thanks to the anonymous donor who contributed essential medical supplies to 42 OKU recipients, especially those who are bedridden. Your generosity brought care and dignity to those who need it most.

We are also grateful to The Star and journalist Sheila Sri Priya for covering this breakthrough in disability empowerment.

Read the article here:



This is just the beginning. At MILAD, we believe that when young persons with disabilities are equipped to lead, the whole nation moves forward.



DONATION PLEDGE FORM

I (WE) WOULD LIKE TO PLEDGE TO MILAD

NAME(S) MAKING PLEDGE:

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PLEDGE:

ADDRESS:

.....

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PHONE:

EMAIL:

Bank Transfer via CIMB (Eligible for tax exemption)

- Account Name: Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled
- Account Number: 8011278630

Bank Transfer via Maybank

- Account Name: Malaysia Independent Living Association For Disabled
- Account Number: 512231410368
- Swift Code: MBBEMYKL

Important:

To receive an official receipt for tax exemption, kindly email a copy of your bank-in slip to:

✉ info@miladmalaysia.org or miladmalaysia@gmail.com

Important Note on Tax-Exemption Eligibility:

☀ Only donations made to the **Tabung Kebajikan dan Pendidikan MILAD** via the **CIMB Bank** account are eligible for tax exemption under LHDN guidelines.

🚫 Contributions directed to the Maybank account are **NOT** eligible for tax exemption benefits.

Thank you for your generous support in helping us empower lives!



Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (“MILAD”) is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation run by a group of people with disabilities, to help people with disabilities toward Independent Living, regardless of their background, race and religion.

OUR VISION

It is our vision to establish a society that embraces the concept of Independent Living which promotes the disabled peoples full inclusion and participation in the community, wherein the disabled people are given the same life opportunities and the same choices in everyday life that the non-disabled people take for granted.



OUR GOAL

Our goal is to train, equip and empower the people with disabilities to live independently, and at the same time advocating for equal rights and opportunities for them. We strive toward creating awareness so that the general public will have the right perspective toward disability and people with disabilities, and hence able to help transform the society to allow full inclusion and participation at every possible level by the disabled people.

